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Aphorisms

for the

Bear

Alice Wellington Rollins

KC4575



Aphorisms for the Year

ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS

Fourth Edition.



BRONXVILLE, N. Y.

1897.

KC 4575



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THE "Aphorisms" appeared originally in *The Century*. Of the brief paragraphs and verses, some are printed here for the first time; but the greater part are extracts from my longer work, which has appeared in *The Century*, *St. Nicholas*, *Wide Awake*, *Harper's Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Harper's Bazar*, the *McClure Syndicate*, *The Cosmopolitan*, *The Overland Monthly*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, *Worthington's Magazine*, and in "*The Ring of Amethyst*," and "*From Palm to Glacier*," published for me by Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

A. W. R.

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ALICE W. ROLLINS.



JANUARY 1-4

1.

Remember that the whim of to-day is the impulse of to-morrow, the wish of next week, the effort of next month, the good or bad taste of next year, the habit of your old age, and the instinct of your descendants.

2.

Learn to accept happiness with a reverent surprise and grace ; unhappiness, with a recognition of the inevitable, and resignation to the facts of fate.

3.

Realism is not meant to dispute the right of way with the Ideal, but with the False.

4.

Make my days happy, love ; yet I entreat

Make not each happier than the last for me ;
Lest heaven itself should dawn for me, complete
In joy, not the surprise I dreamed 't would be ;
But simply as the natural and sweet
Continuance of days spent here with thee.

JANUARY 5-8

5.

To be something to everybody and yet nothing to anybody—surely that would be hardly satisfying.

6.

O beloved, who from my sight
Art gone, how well I know that high and clear
Thy thoughts in that far home burn bright for me !
Well must thou know thou still to me art dear ;
Yet thrills my heart in nameless agony
To cry to thee, “ O love, I hear, I see ! ”
Though through God’s dark I cannot see or hear !

7.

We are wont to be discouraged at the slow progress of civilization ; ought not years and experience to teach us faster ? That it advances so slowly is because the struggle is not between knowledge and ignorance, but between knowledge and feeling. We know more, but we also feel more ; and what we feel influences us more than what we know.

8.

How much ought we to let the Young Person know of the dark side of life ? Ah ! that is hard to tell ; but something, surely, that the shock of sudden and too late knowledge may not kill or discourage. If you would not have the finest broadcloth shrink when it is wet, you must first carefully wet it yourself with a sponge.

JANUARY 9-11

9.

The eager words come pouring out :
His eyes glow as he presses near ;
She listens with her head downcast,
But well he knows she likes to hear.

A lover ? No, a boy of ten,
Who tells his mother o'er and o'er
The story of Ulysses, which
He thinks she never heard before.

10.

The frost is here, the chilling snow,
The freezing wind, the barren bough ;
No brightness is without, within,
Save what ourselves can kindle now.
I touch the fire, I trim the lamp,
Yet that is not enough of cheer ;
And yet—and yet—the world's aglow
With light, if thou but love me, dear !

11.

And once my heart was like a gem
Set in a fair betrothal ring ;
Content to light the happy darks
That shield love's shy self-wondering.
But now I think my heart is like
The lady fair who wears the ring,
Pressed closely to her lips at night
With love's mysterious wondering
That hers should be the precious thing.

JANUARY 12-14

12.

It is strange that we do not realize the duty of being charming as well as virtuous. Most wives make the mistake of thinking they have done all that is necessary when they have made their husbands comfortable. And the worst mistake of all is when they insist on making him comfortable according to their own ideas of comfort. "Do eat this while it is hot," when perhaps he prefers it cold; and he dutifully scalds his mouth, rather than have a scene as to how he shall arrange his own breakfast.

13.

There is danger that the soul which has felt strong emotion will cease to care for convictions; and yet no opinion is a perfectly safe one that has not been steeped in emotion. It must not be still damp with it, but it should have been at least sprinkled and then dried in the sun of reason. To feel intensely without being injured in one's intellectual integrity, that is the ideal; but most of us come out of our bath of emotion drowned instead of baptized.

14.

Flushed in the morning light, she danced and sang;
While I forgot the murmuring poet's lay,
As through the room her sweeter wisdom rang:
"Mamma! mamma! To-morrow is to-day!"

JANUARY 15-20

15.

The test of a student is not how much he knows, but how much he wants to know.

16.

Some people have to have their sunshine warm ; others are satisfied just with its being sunshine.

17.

The test of charm is not how deeply you feel it, but how keenly you remember it.

The test of fascination is not how perfectly you remember it, but how much else you forget.

18.

We speak of man's faith in God ; but let us also remember God's faith in man. Temptation does not come from the devil, it is God's compliment to us. He believes us able to examine, to judge, to choose rightly. Shall we disappoint him ?

19.

God save us ever from those sudden moods
When all life narrows to a single point,
And when the poor heart seizes its desire,
Only to wake to deeper restlessness.

20.

The test of beauty is not that it is perfect, but that it always attracts.

JANUARY 21-25

21.

The test of happiness is the art of forgetting actual unhappiness.

The test of unhappiness is the habit of forgetting actual happiness.

22.

Freedom does not necessarily mean the ability to skip about. A bird is free to move where he will, even within reach of the sportsman's gun ; but the apple blossom is also free, if, without canker within or blight from without, it can quietly, without stirring from the bough, turn into an apple.

23.

Even if Nature were really the highest type of what is beautiful, we must remember that Nature has been corrupted for a series of generations, till it is next to impossible to say what really is Nature, and what is simply the result of an accumulation of ancestral and personal bad habits.

24.

The worst pessimism is that which leads a poor life, and then preaches what it practises.

25.

The variety of impressions that your brain receives, determines your health and sanity ; the depth and permanence of separate impressions is what determines character. Beware of what remains with you.

JANUARY 26-31

26.

If the consequences are hard, bear them like a man—especially if you are a woman.

27.

My definition of a friend is one to whom you never need explain things.

28.

We must be natural above all things. Of course ; but if you are behind footlights, you must heighten your complexion artistically in order to appear natural ; as the merchant, to cover all his expenses, must charge some advance on the mere cost of his particular merchandise.

29.

If you are curious to measure the diameter of the circle you have been describing the past year, ask yourself, "What things do I care about now that I did not know of, or care about, a year ago ?"

30.

Right feeling does away with the necessity for right opinions.

31.

The test of simplicity is not what it lacks, but what it chooses to do without.

FEBRUARY 1-5

1.

The test of a fine man is not the harm that he hasn't done, but the good that he has.

2.

The loveliest strength is that of the diamond. Clear as dew, it is firm as adamant. Yet it is not obstinate ; it can be cut, though only by another diamond, its peer. You can do nothing to it but improve it.

3.

She is so pleasant to live with because nothing is essential to her happiness. A thousand things make her happy, but very few make her unhappy.

4.

The air is crisp and sparkling ; the liquid light upon the grass is frost dissolved in sunshine ; as different from mere dew as the tenderness of a great heart is different from the mere sentiment of a weak one.

5.

Mothers think up little things to amuse their children when they come home from school ; kindergarten children bring home from school little things to amuse their mothers.

FEBRUARY 6-11

6.

To be willing to be a performer is to be willing to take one's share of the drudgery of the world ; to wish to be a performer is to have what those less cynical than Goethe justly call aspirations.

7.

The test of useful knowledge is not how deep it goes, but how readily it comes to the surface.

8.

Work does not mean the dreary setting to rights of disorder that has been introduced into a perfect universe ; it means merely helping to finish a world that was left incomplete.

9.

Education is not putting up a lattice for frail things to lean upon, but developing the inward strength that makes lovely things shoot up of themselves.

10.

Fortunately what God expects of us is not *the* best, but only *our* best.

11.

Moods? That need not trouble you. The diamond has a hundred moods to-day, and will have a hundred different moods to-morrow ; but it is transparent to the core. Many-sided, it is single-hearted.

FEBRUARY 12-14

12.

He was not a hero, but he was a beautiful and much-needed illustration of the graceful recipient. Accept nothing you can get for yourself ; return every favor you possibly can ; but if a better fellow offers you what you can't get for yourself, or what he knows you cannot return—take it.

13.

He was willing to forgive them himself, but he hoped the Lord wouldn't.

14.

Dreaming of love and fame, sweetheart,
I dreamed that a sunbeam shone
For a wavering instant, and where it played
A hundred flowers had grown.
The sunshine flitting so soon away
Was a smile thou hadst given me ;
And the flowers that bloomed in the world for aye
Were the songs I wrote for thee.

Waking to love and life, sweetheart,
I saw the flowers fade ;
While still from the measureless heavens above
The flickering sunshine played ;
The flowers fading from all men's sight
Were the songs they had heard from me ;
And the light that illumined the world to them,
Was a single smile from thee !

FEBRUARY 15-20

15.

Humility's a grace at thirty-nine ;
But scarce a virtue in the very young.
Who bend to us from fear, not reverence.

16.

There are only two really sad things in life : to lose
one's faith in one's self, or one's faith in another.
Or, yes, one thing is sadder still : that another
should lose his faith in you.

17.

The problem of Christianity is the saving of souls ;
but the problem of civilization is how to produce souls
that will not need saving.

18.

It is so much more fun to be a little richer than
you were yesterday, than merely to be rich.

19.

" Afraid to go into that cobweb ? Just see me go
through it ! " said the broom to the fly.

20.

Long vistas of wide space that lead between
Gray boughs, etched keenly on the even sky ;
Far finer than the multitudinous green
Of listless leaves that with the summer die.

FEBRUARY 21-26

21.

Education is not teaching facts, but producing fine and strong impressions. If you want your boy to be patriotic, don't tell him so, but take him out to see some great pageant, like Lincoln's funeral or the Columbus processions.

22.

Perhaps we shall be forgiven for having loved a little things we ought not to love much, if only we have loved most the things we ought to love a great deal.

23.

The saddest thing is to be endowed with liberty to do as we please, and then to please to do the wrong thing.

24.

Do you want to know what hell is ? It is not sulphur, and it is not burning flames : it is losing your interest in things.

25.

A man is born knowing his weakness and having to struggle for his strength. A woman is born knowing her strength, and having to struggle with her weakness.

26.

Let nothing in the world embitter you ; not even the sense of your own folly.

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 1

27.

“Lead us not into temptation” does not mean that you are to retire from the world behind silk curtains. It merely means that you are not to draw aside the curtains behind which the temptation itself may be hidden.

28.

One satisfied with what must be her lot,—
 ’Twas not a corner lot,—serenely meant
Never to wander from her humble cot,
 Made beautiful by wise and sweet content.

And one, dissatisfied with all he had,
 Roved from his place into the world’s mad whirl.
What did he find? Well, it was not so bad:—
 The fellow found that cottage and that girl.

29.

The winter’s peace? Nay, tired earth, not so.
Sweet as the violets of long ago,
The pink arbutus rises from the snow.

MARCH.

1.

There are two kinds of doubt: there is the doubt of a man on his knees before an idol, whether he ought not to spring to his feet in manly self-dependence;—and there is the doubt of a man standing erect in the presence of a god, whether he ought not to throw himself upon his knees.

MARCH 2-4

2.

Depict everything that exists ? No ; you may not. Literature implies choice, emphasis ; it is *Life* in italics ; we should not emphasize everything. Literature is *Life* in bronze, in marble ; you are not an artist if you mould your ideals in butter, and you are very much to be pitied if you enjoy moulding them in mud. Literature is to *Life* what the sign-board is to the highway : it may point the right road to town, or it may call attention to a particularly fine view, or it may very justly put up a " Danger " signal where the road is bad ; but of what use are the Ibsen guide-posts which inform you that if you turn to the left and go a mile out of your way, and cut down the underbrush, you will find a stagnant pool where you will be very much surprised to find one ?

3.

Not that I grieved you ; no remembered thorn,
Left in your heart, frets now my own repose ;
I only wonder, left so soon forlorn,
Whether I could have found you one more rose.

4.

Do not hope to reform the world by airing your opinions. What you do, is of great importance to society ; what you say, is of great importance to your family and friends ; what you feel, is of great importance to yourself ; but what you think, is of very little importance to anybody.

MARCH 5-7

5.

Judge not by appearances. The hands of a clock frequently seem to be running away from twelve o'clock ; but they are always secretly, quietly, and uninterruptedly going towards it again, and will always arrive exactly when they are expected. I do not demand the episodes of your career, but only the large general result.

6.

Not the endurance that has to say, "*I cannot*," but the endurance that chooses to say, "*I will not*."

7.

So little made me glad when I was young :

Flowers, a sunset, books, a friend or two ;

Gray skies with scanty sunshine piercing through—
How little made me glad ! for I was young.

So little makes me happy, now I'm old !

Your hand in mine, dear wife, here by the fire,

The children grown unto our hearts' desire—

How little keeps us happy when we're old !

And yet, between the little then and now,

What worlds of life, of thought, of feeling keen !

What spiritual depths and heights unseen,

Ah me ! between the little then and now !

For little things seem mighty when we're young ;

Then we rush onward through the changing years,

Testing the gamut of all smiles and tears,

Till mighty things seem little : we are old.

MARCH 8-11

8.

We are wont to speak of people who "inspire respect"; but remember that respect is always beautiful to show, whether it is inspired and deserved or not. If you are rude to me, it is because you are you, not because I am I.

9.

The loveliest flowers never feel disdain
At drawing from this common life of ours
The sources of their beauty and their life.

10.

Sometimes the singular means more than the plural: it is better to be a woman of nerve than a woman of nerves.

11.

Sleep visits not my eyelids ; yet I rest
In a content more deep than any sleep ;
Nay, wrapt in joy my vigil here I keep,
With trembling hands clasped to my eager breast.
For one I love, after long hours of pain,
Sleeps near me now ; think you that I could sleep,
Though needless now the vigil that I keep,
With the dread lifted from my heart and brain ?
Think you that I would sleep ?—would be beguiled,
Cheated, of this my joy ? Nay, let me fast
From sleep for long, glad hours, to hear at last
The low, soft breathing of my ailing child.

MARCH 12-15

12.

The early bird catches the worm ; but a late one catches the crumbs from my lady's breakfast.

13.

The test of a great love—yes, even of a supreme passion—is not what it demands, but what it consents to do without.

14.

O but for one short hour
To have enough to do !—
Who could believe the idle rich
Would keep their wants so few ?
I am tired of weeping here ;
For God's sake, ease my brain
By letting me tire idle hands
With a wealth of work again !

15.

But to the One who gives both sea and shore,
Who from the darkness light and gladness frees,
Rises the sweetest hymn for evermore,
Not from the lips of such glad souls as these ;—
But from the bed where one all night has lain,
Stillling his moans to let his watchers sleep,
Who suddenly across his bed of pain
Sees the faint gray of early morning creep.

MARCH 16-19

16.

He may not be a Puritan in regard to all things that he likes; but he is a Puritan in regard to the things he likes best.

17.

Is heaven having everything you want? No; it is knowing what you do want, in addition to liking what you happen to have.

18.

You meant to wound me? Then forgive,
O friend, that when the blow fell, I
Turned my face from you to the wall
To smile, instead of die.

You meant to gladden me? Dear friend,
Whose praise like jewels I have kept,
Forgive me, that for very joy
I bent my happy head, and wept.

19.

Not truly humble is the violet,
That keeps its face quite upturned to the sun,
And would grow higher if it could; it cannot.
Better for our young friend the haughtiness
Of strong white lilies, that refuse to bloom
Near the dark earth they sprang from; eagerly
They push aside the lazy weeds that hide
The upper air, and keeping in their breasts
The fair white secret of their blossoming,
Rise to the heaven they worship.

MARCH 20-23

20.

Shall we be strong, then, like iron, that holds leaping flame in its embrace, and itself is not bent, or melted, or broken, save by fiercest blow or intensest heat ? Ah ! but one would like to be a little more sensitive than that. Is there nothing that is both strong and tender ?

21.

A cobweb spun across an open doorway is a surer sign that nobody has entered lately than an iron-bolted gate.

22.

“ No longer war ! ” with noble zeal they said.

“ Wise arbitration shall decide each feud.”

And so they melted down their sinful lead,

With such new fervor were they all imbued.

Was it the love of man for fellow-man ?

I fear me, not ; but each had grown so skilled,

Building great guns, each knew, if war began,

And both should fire, both would soon be killed.

23.

The artist does not imitate nature ; he interprets it ; and the spectator, to criticise, must be, not one who understands nature, but one who can interpret the interpretation.

MARCH 24-27

24.

There are two kinds of simplicity : the simplicity of the wild-flower, and the simplicity of the diamond. The nugget of gold, just from the mine, untouched by worldliness, mixed with alloy and dull with unuse, is not half so simple as the wedding-ring made from it, wrought with such care, fashioned so perfectly, worn with such happiness.

25.

He paid ten cents one day, he said,
For a plant with flowers on it ;
And then he wrote about those flowers
A fine ten-dollar sonnet.

I hastened to the florist's, bought
A plant, and plied my pen ;
But my investment's quick return
Was my sonnet back again.

26.

Art is to Nature what his uniform is to a general : he is just as much of a man in his usual outfit ; but he is very much more of a general in his gold lace and buttons. The uniform does not alter the man, but it almost creates the general. Hence I am not afraid of Nature in the uniform of Art.

27.

The wisdom of love is often better than the love of wisdom.

MARCH 28-APRIL 1

28.

One waits for Opportunity; to be
Freed from his moorings: with the flood, he glides.
One waits for Inspiration; like the sea
That waits, but only waits for its own tides.

29.

Remember that you are to be interesting as well
as interested.

Also remember that you are to be interested as
well as interesting.

30.

Hearts already glad
Beat quicker for the smiling of her lips ;
Even as the summer air, that seemed o'ercharged
With fragrance, will grow even sweeter still
At sudden blossoming of one more rose.

31.

I wonder what the effect would have been if Eve
had baked the apple before she ate it. Probably
worse ; she would have wanted cream on it then.

APRIL

1.

“ O Lord, be merciful to me, a fool ! ”
Pathetic was this fine jest of the poet ;
Yet be Thou still more merciful, O Lord,
To him who is a fool and does not know it.

APRIL 2-6

2.

Stevenson pitied the man who had not once in his life made a fool of himself. The only thing not to be endured is that he should make a fool of himself twice. You may be foolish on April 1st, but let the 2d of April find you in your right mind.

3.

They say the rich are to blame,
With their idle, haughty ways ;
Their world of manifold foolish wants,
Their proud, untoiling days.
But it seems to me their wants
Are all too strangely few :
They cannot find for a girl like me
A single thing to do !

4.

Do not trouble yourself about finding your career :
if you are destined to have one, it will find you.

5.

The same trait sometimes seems very different in a different temperament ; as one woman wears violet perfume on her handkerchief, while another wears fresh violets.

6.

Some people, if they get what they want, merely think that it is what they ought to have ; if they don't get it, they are embittered. Providence can never please them ; it can only disappoint.

APRIL 7-12

7.

The artisan hurries through his work to get to his dinner ; the artist hurries through his dinner to get to his work.

8.

“Afraid to be left alone ? Why, that is what I like best,” said the solitaire diamond to the little boy.

9.

Tact is not the quality by which you often please, but by which you seldom offend.

10.

The white flowers of the north look as if nothing had ever soiled them ; but the white flowers of the tropics look as if nothing ever could soil them.

11.

The test of a lover is not how many he has loved, but how well ; the test of a philanthropist is not how well he has loved, but how many.

12.

The loveliest of all lovely things

Love even what is dull in spring ;

The bluebird and the oriole

Seek the brown earth with flashing wing.

And flowers no longer bloom alone,

But crowd the gnarled old apple-bough ;—

We were but dullards, love, indeed,

Did we not love each other now.

APRIL 13-16

13.

To be waked by meadow-larks ! One longs to go
out and hunt in the grass for the lovely liquid notes
they have let fall ; it seems as if they must sparkle
where they dropped.

14.

Light are the tendrils of the curling vine ;
Faint the pale hint of flowers, later on
To round to perfect globes of purple wine ;
All things are gentle,—to be strong anon.

Soft is the air, thin, with a hint of rain ;
The sunshine loiters ; not with languorous glow,
But timid still, though tremulously fain
In a dull world its richer wealth to show.

15.

It is the test of fine character, as of fine singing,
that the person displaying it makes it seem, not a
difficult thing well done, but the simplest thing in
the world to do.

16.

Ah, yes ! I know my changeful heart's caprice :
When once again the little leaves appear,
Trembling with fresh delight at their release
From the mysterious prison of the year,
I, too, shall laugh, and say how fine it is
That the cold thralldom of the snow is done ;
For this is best, of all earth's mysteries :
That is the best which has but just begun.

APRIL 17-20

17.

For a bit of bright verse, the editor said,
He would give five dollars or more ;
I wanted five dollars just then, so I fled
To my sanctum, and let genius soar.

I wrote the bright verse, and that editor rare
Sent his check in reply for my wit ;
The result is, you see, the spring bonnet I wear ;
And as for the verse,—this is it.

18.

We are really to aim at results only as a dog aims
at catching the stick his master has thrown for him.
He does not care for the stick ; what he likes is the
running.

19.

There are comparative degrees which mean less than
the positive ; often you can be very much poorer than
you were, without being really poor.

20.

Do not pride yourself on having kept entirely aloof
from evil. That would be unfortunate for those you
might have helped out of evil. If you are hungry,
seek for a perfectly healthy oyster ; but if you are
well fed, do not hesitate to look at a diseased one :
you may find a pearl.

APRIL 21-25

21.

What mock heroics in the morbid, sickly interviews between lovers in novels who meet continually to say to each other that they ought not, dare not, must not, cannot, shall not, will not,—but do,—love each other !

22.

Some people's advice is like the flag in the park that means "Keep off the grass." It may keep the little boys off, but it won't keep off the snow.

23.

The lighthouse does great service to humanity ; yet it is the slave of those who trim the lamps.

24.

How do I miss thee ? As the violets miss
The sun when clouds have hidden it. Dear one,
Wilt thou not tell me whether in heaven the sun
Misses the violet it cannot kiss ?

25.

When in the thoughtful twilight we, her friends,
Walk with her, and in spirit dimly feel
A strange, rare fragrance o'er the senses steal,
Let us speak softly of a Past that sends
Through the closed crevice of its silent door,
No bitterness in life's remembered hours ;
But in the delicate breath of such fair flowers,
Only the sweetness of the days of yore.

APRIL 26-30

26.

Richly plain is her robe, but plainly rich ;
Noble her mien, as one of royal birth ;
A duchess or a queen, you know not which ;
Her name, Simplicity,—but gowned by Worth.

27.

Happiness has been defined as having things ; better, as having what you want ; better still, as being able to do without what you want.

28.

Many people are willing to be martyrs, but not unless they can have the glory of their martyrdom. They are willing to bare their breast to the thorn, provided they can bare the thorn to the world.

29.

The perfumes that women wear so extravagantly are a great mistake. Instead of reminding us sweetly of flowers, the flowers are beginning to remind us painfully of *sachets* and essences. I am so afraid that a day will come when I shall hate the smell of violets.

30.

The conscientious wife who “always greets her husband with a smile ” would wear me out in a week.

MAY 1-5

1.

And then we talk about free-will ! I am free to do as I please, granted ; but I am not free as to what I may wish to do. I have inherited tastes from a very mixed set of ancestors, and I may find myself suddenly wishing to do something that I don't like wishing to do: one of the hardest paradoxes in life.

2.

Lest I too rudely should awaken thee,
With hushed and reverent step I steal away ;
Praying God bless the dreamer and the dream.

3.

It is sometimes a compliment to be neglected. There are people to whom we are very polite, not because we crave their affection, but because we dread their touchiness.

4.

Strange, that a man, a generation long,
Should do good deeds that should his generous lips
To noble curves, and then should die and leave
His son the curves without the nobleness.

5.

It is not denying yourself what is beautiful and dear, simply for the sake of self-denial, that helps the soul ; it is denying yourself what is harmful, or what another needs, that saves repression from its element of danger.

MAY 6-10

6.

Eyes dazzled see as badly as the blind.

7.

The test of innocence is not its ignorance, but its choice of what it knows.

8.

The Greeks made the tragedy of life to consist in our blind slavery to fate ; that nothing could have averted it, was the keynote to their suffering. The modern makes the tragedy of life to consist in our ignorance or wilfulness ; that it might so easily have been avoided, is the keynote to our suffering.

9.

I have a friend,—I mean a foe,—
Whom cordially I ought to hate ;
But, somehow, I can never seem
To lay the feud between us straight.
When apple-boughs are full of bloom,
And Nature loves her fellow-men,
With all the witchery of spring,
How can you hate a fellow then ?

10.

She is one who sometimes takes an unnecessarily heavy hammer to destroy a cobweb ; but then, on the other hand, she is one who, in an emergency, can brush aside an iron-bolted gate as if it were a cobweb.

MAY 11-14

11.

The white moon slips from the silent sea,
The sea slips from the shore ;
And back to my happy, silent heart
Sweeps the flood of words once more.

But not till the waves have kissed the beach,
And the moon has kissed the sea,
And not until I, too, sweetheart,
Have kissed—been kissed by—thee.

12.

Which is the saddest : evil that could have been
helped, or evil that could not have been helped ?

13.

Immortal type of the eternal spring is she ;—
So young and fair ? Nay, that she can be no more ;
But who can tell of springtime which it be—
Spring that comes after summer, or before ?

14.

And once my heart was like a nest,
Where singing-birds have made their home,
Set where the apple-boughs in bloom
Fleck the blue air with flower-foam.
But now it is itself a bird,
And if it does not always sing,
The Heavenly Father knows what thoughts,
Too strangely sweet for uttering,
Stir faintly underneath its wing.

MAY 15-18

15.

Those who praise
The beauty of the gem, admire most
The changefulness of its most restless rays ;
Yet I feel no uneasiness or doubt ;
Knowing full well, whenever I look down
Upon my breast, the jewel will be there.

16.

Sweet Marguerite looked shyly from the grass
Of country fields, and softly whispered, " Here
I make my home, content ; for I, alas !
Am not the rose the city holds so dear."

Just then, the queen, driving by chance that way,
Called to a page, " Bring me that marguerite !
I am so tired of roses !" From that day
The daisy had the whole world at her feet.

17.

And one who cared less for the glorious sight
Than for the joy to come with that first ray,
Ran to his casement to greet there the light
That ushered in for him his wedding-day.

18.

Real troubles are the cause, but imaginary troubles
the result, of disease.

MAY 19-23

19.

The kindergarten child never forgets ; because he is never told anything which he had not first wanted to know.

20.

“ If I had only known ! ” we cry sorrowfully. But what should we have done if we had known ? Something different, certainly, but it might not have been anything wiser.

21.

I know a flower that never need feel dread
Of being picked : the fairest flower of May,
It fears henceforth no stranger's dangerous tread.
Why ? Oh ! because I picked it yesterday.

22.

Dante adored woman ; Wordsworth commended her ; Shakespeare loved her ; Tolstol planted her in sunshine and watered her with his tears, only to tear her up by the roots at last ; Burns smiled at her ; Moore succumbed to her ; Henry James studies her ; Maupassant thinks her wicked, but interesting ; Bourget dissects her ; Balzac understands her.

23.

But if the lovely visions that have grown
So fair and dear, flit vanishing away,
God blesses dreamers that no longer dream.

MAY 24-27

24.

Some people think that they are good if they are doing good ; others often think that they are doing good if they simply are good. Both are frequently mistaken.

25.

Circumstantial evidence ? Never trust to it. Would you condemn a man as a thief because he knew the way to the cake-box ? But two people know the way to the cake-box : one is the naughty little boy who takes the cake out, and the other is the excellent housekeeper who puts the cake in.

26.

We speak sometimes of a "dominant" trait, or passion, or mode of thought ; but it is often probable in a mind of this sort that there are really no other traits or passions or modes of thought. What seems mastery of one thing may merely mean the monotony of the whole.

27.

A golden moon fills all the sky ;
And stirring at her feet
The white floods rise and leap to shore,
Bold lovers, brave and fleet.

But a swifter flood to feel her sway,
And rush in resistless tide,
Is the love that leaps from my heart to lips,
For her whom I walk beside.

MAY 28-31

28.

For she is a true woman, and her will hangs poised
upon her heart.

29.

A nice little saint, having a good time over other
people's sins. You are not going to do anything out
of the way yourself, but you want to be there all the
same. You want to be in it, without being to blame
for it.

30.

A world of nerves, of jarring pain ;
Discord and weariness ; and then
With sudden sweetness dawns the reign
Of love and light again.

A world that seemed of peace the grave ;
Then one with peace that plighted troth ;
With naught between the two worlds, save
An hour's unconsciousness of both.

31.

If ever the dread day should come again
When the whole country needs her boys in blue,
How could I bear, dear lad, among the men
Marching to war and danger, to see you ?

My heart sinks as I watch them through the glass ;
And yet I know one thing were worse to bear :
That underneath my window they should pass,
And I should look, and find you were *not* there !

JUNE 1-5

1.

Habit is the secret of success in life, and of failure. You may do almost anything once ; it is the things you permit yourself to do twice that determine your destiny.

2.

Some people's virtue is like that of the little boy who developed a great willingness to brush his hair nicely—when the opportunity offered to try a silver hair-brush not his own.

3.

Some people with faults are like the robins Lowell speaks of : they eat up your cherries, but you would rather have the robins than the cherries.

4.

The rose had a big thorn ; but he thought of Mabel, and picked it. The college examination was very easy ; but he was thinking of Mabel, and lost it.

5.

Woman's place in literature may yet come to be that of a superlative observer of the folly, the chivalry, the weakness, the nobility of men ; as man's place has long been that of the cleverest, most subtle, most keen, most generous observer of the woman herself.

JUNE 6-10

6.

Before my window, lit but now with sun,
The wrinkled curtain of the wind-swept rain
Falls heavily ; shadow and rose are one,
To me, behind the thin white window-pane.

7.

The high school graduates exceptional scholars,
who will frame wise laws for the community ; the
kindergarten trains a community that will need less
the restraint of so much law.

8.

Lament no past that has been honest, even if an
honest mistake.

9.

The seeds of all most precious things
Are sown ; we have naught else to do
But wait for golden summer noons
To bring the harvest that we woo.
Only to wait ; the seed is sown ;
The generous sky bends from above ;
What were such golden leisure for,
But for the heart to rest—and love ?

10.

“ You will reap what you sow,” said the wise papa ;
And the wise little boy who heard,
Said at once, “ Then I'll plant some canary seed,
And perhaps I shall raise a bird ! ”

JUNE 11-14

11.

“Why, I’m not a bit afraid of tigers,” said the mosquito to the timid man.

12.

You need not bring her back again ;
To tell the truth, you know,
I have no wish to be again
That child of long ago.

Of course I’m very old ; but then,
If I wish to play, you see,
There’s always close beside me now
Another little Me.

He’s ten years old, and he’s a boy,
A mischievous young elf ;
But I like him every bit as well
As I used to like myself.

13.

Unfailing her serene and perfect smile ;
A tender light burns ever in her eyes,
Brightening at times, but never fading, while
She listens—so is Melancholy wise.

14.

Everybody entreats me not to do the wrong thing ;
as if, good heavens ! I wanted to do the wrong
thing. All I want is to know which is the wrong
thing.

JUNE 15-18

15.

The personality of the artist should be lost in the charm of his work. You do not want to think how clever he is, but how charming it is ; you must not ask, "Who did it ?" but "Who is it ?" when you look at a portrait.

16.

And then when summer comes, with days
Full of a long and languid charm,
When even water lilies sleep
On waves without a thought of harm,
When underneath the shadiest tree
My hammock hangs in idlest state,
I were an idiot to get up
Out of that hammock just to hate.

17.

Here is a college graduate who is narrow, bigoted, and unpleasant. "Behold the effect of college education !" exclaims the Philistine, without any cognizance of the fact that the man might have been still more narrow, bigoted, and unpleasant without his college education.

18.

Never trust to circumstantial evidence. There are people who, without looking in the hayloft, would accept the evidence of a close-shorn field of grass that it could not raise any hay.

JUNE 19-23

19.

And then the pretty bird whose restless feet
Danced in and out among the blossoms there,
For very joyousness sent rippling sweet
A carol of bright laughter through the air.
Flushing with joy, the apple-boughs swung high,
Responsive to the quiver of her wings ;
As, light of heart beneath the summer sky,
Her voice ceased suddenly its twitterings,
To murmur back, "Thou foolish, dear old tree,
It is not I who bring the flowers to thee,
But thy most tempting flowers that bring me !"

20.

There is such a thing as too much kindness ; as if
one should toast the bread for a bird, or spread with
mayonnaise the lettuce for a rabbit.

21.

There is a time when we think ourselves wondrous
wise. Then comes a time when we fear we have been
ridiculously foolish. Then, later still, a wise toler-
ance for our own folly, as well as for that of others.

22.

The test of a good woman is that she makes the
rest of us good.

23.

Do not permit yourself futile regret. "If I had
only known !" is the morbid complaint of a weak
spirit ; "I did not know," is the frank confession of
a strong one.

JUNE 24-27

24.

Not long, alas ! not long ; the mother-heart
Knows well how quickly she will have to part
With all this wonder ; she who tries each art
To lure him on ; the first to coax and praise
Each added grace ; then first in sore amaze
To mourn that he has lost his baby ways !

25.

By no friend's footstep is it visited ;
No flowers are there, not even a hardened wreath
Of immortelles ; no marble at its head
Tells the cold secret of who sleeps beneath.
Though he has charmed a world with fire and soul,
His lowly grave is never visited.
Sad ? Strange ? Well, not so very, on the whole—
You see, this charming man is not yet dead.

26.

It is undercurrents that tell.

27.

A wonderful housewife is Mrs. O'More ;
Every Saturday morning you'll see
A whirlwind of dust from her window and door.
Such a thorough sweeper is she.
No whirlwind of dust from window or door
Of her neighbor across the way ;
That's because the neighbor of Mrs. O'More
Sweeps a little up every day.

JUNE 28-JULY 3

28.

Columbus did not merely discover America to Spain : he discovered her to herself.

29.

The shadow of a white rose is as dark as the shadow of a mountain.

30.

Her days are as a silver-flowing stream :
Above, the rippling sunbeams dance and gleam ;
Beneath, strong currents noiseless as a dream.

JULY.

1.

You are not necessarily educated because you have been to college. Each soul needs a different education. Many a man has been educated by his folly.

2.

Clouds fall in shadows, though not yet in rain ;
The poplar shivers at the coming chill ;
Until the blurring rain blots out the plain,
And thirsting roses drink their glowing fill.

3.

A pearl may be stainlessly white, but it will never gleam with the thousand lights of a faceted diamond, which is just as pure and far more transparent.

JULY 4-7

4.

Not as of old

The indolent aristocrats decreed
The king's son should be king ; we will obey
Kings only, not kings' sons. He shall be king—
The people's servant and the nation's seer—
Who, far from being of our common clay,
Challenges all the loyalty we bring
Because among us he hath *not* his peer.

5.

“ You say you can make me tremble ; then you
are the very thing I want,” said the Maple Tree to
the Breeze on a hot day in July.

6.

Mothers used to tell their children pretty stories
at bedtime to make them forget the weary hours at
school ; but nowadays the children of the kindergar-
ten entertain their mothers with the delightful story
of all the pleasant things they have seen, or heard, or
made, all day at school.

7.

But soft ! what light through yonder window breaks ?
’Tis *not* the east ! ’tis Juliet ! I have won !
But, dearest lute, thy task is not yet done ;
Still must thy sweet persuasion, for our sakes,
Its gentle effort kindly make to keep
Papa asleep !

JULY 8-11

8.

The test of a broom is not its experience, but its lack of it.

9.

Cæsar had his Brutus ; Charles the First his Cromwell ; George the Third his Washington ; Becky Sharp had her Thackeray.

10.

The hot sun stooped, his eager thirst to slake ;
I trembled for the trembling little lake.

I thought to see it shrivel in his clutch ;
But lo ! it bloomed with lilies at his touch.

Fear not, sweet saint, by joy to be undone ;
Peace comes with joy, as lilies with the sun.

11.

My heart was like a flower once,
That from its jewel-tinted cup
The generous fragrance of its joy
To all the world sent floating up.
But now 'tis like a humming-bird
That in the cup his bright wing dips,
And with most dainty selfishness
Himself the choicest honey sips,
With eager, thirsting, longing lips.

JULY 12-16

12.

When the cat's away the mice will play ;
That is certainly very true ;
But I'd like to know, when the mice are away,
What the poor old cat can do ?

13.

The sentimental temperament is not the poetic.
The poet gazes at the moon ; but the sentimentalist
is satisfied with gazing at its reflection in the pond.

14.

Her punishment, who dealt the blow,
Was not in hell, but heaven, to wring
Her hands in swift repentant woe:
"I would I had not done that thing!"

15.

Her joys are bright-winged birds that from on high
Come singing down, and tempt the stream to try
And sing with them, as they flit singing by.

Her sorrows—she has none her heart will own ;
The air is silent when the birds have flown,
But the poor stream still sings the song, alone.

16.

Two things may be lukewarm : that which has not
been cooked enough, and that which has been cooked
a second time. Her warmth is the warmth of things
warmed over.

JULY 17-21

17.

She carries loveliest roses in her hands,
And lingers near each merriest scene a while;
Not drooping, but erect and strong she stands—
Sorrow, her name ; I know her by her smile.

18.

She has studied human nature thoroughly—as she
finds it in Balzac.

19.

The Greek lived in constant dread of a Fate that
might overthrow his best intentions; the modern
lives in constant dread of not having the best intentions.

20.

The ordinary child has to remember to be good;
the child of the kindergarten forgets to be naughty.

21.

The silence of a country landscape is sometimes
much more disconcerting and unrestful than the
mere noise of a town. The town is a word, harshly,
abruptly spoken; country silence is not a word, but
it is like the blank line drawn under a word to italicize it, with no letters or meaning of its own, but
intensifying the effect beyond expression.

JULY 22-25

22.

The mental, moral, and physical object of the Delsarte gymnastics, which unite thought with movement, is less that body and mind may learn *expression*, than that they may both be freed from *repression*.

23.

And yet—and yet—remember this, my lute:
Though I would have you wake my lady fair,
And bring her to the balcony up there,
To shine for me, the evening's brightest star—
Remember this: I have no wish to wake
Her dear papa !

24.

For if I

Should behold sorrow coming close to thee,
How could I bear it, love, how could I bear,
Day after day, with bitter pain to see
Thee suffer ? And if fate should let me wear
The cross, how could I bear, love, as my share.
Day after day to see thee grieve for me?

25.

Knowledge is not experience. Two people can make out an excellent *menu* for dinner: one is the gentleman accustomed to eating good dinners, the other is the cook accustomed to preparing them. It is not enough to tell me that you have a dress-suit: you may still be a waiter at a restaurant.

JULY 26-30

26.

They are kind who give us not what they think we ought to want, but what they know we do want.

27.

She has read, but not thought ; heard, but not felt. She has observed—but always through spectacles.

28.

You are unhappy ? But you have no right to make yourself unhappy about being unhappy. What right have you to demand happiness ?

29.

She sleeps ! my lady sleeps !
Let me steal softly through the dusky bowers,
And while the fragrance of the climbing flowers
In at her casement slowly, gently creeps,
Let me below her happy window stand,
And touch my lute with not too light a hand,
Because, you see, she sleeps !
I do not wish that she should sleep.

30.

The soul under repression is like the closed piano that you see in some houses : there is a fine cloth over it, and the dust is kept out, and there are vases on it full of very pretty flowers ; but if it were open, there might be music.

JULY 31-AUGUST 4

31.

With quick pin-pricks the arrowy showers strike
The pale, hurt earth, yet leave no stain or scar.
Sunk to the hilt, the rain-swords are alike
Sheathed in the breast of earth they could not mar.

AUGUST

1.

She rules me merely by expecting things of me
which I should be ashamed not to be equal to.

2.

In the time of the New Ethics we shall not think or
talk so much about virtue ; we shall assume virtue as
a matter of course; then, perhaps, we shall have more
leisure to be delightful.

3.

"I hate you !" shrieked the snake ; with poisoned
fang

He stabs his victim, heedless of his moans.

"I love you !" screamed the lion, as he sprang,
And slowly crunched his shuddering victim's bones.

4.

Within her soul there is a sacred place
Forever set apart to holy thought ;
There once a miracle divine was wrought,
And common things grew fair with heavenly grace.

AUGUST 5-8

5.

All night I slept within my tent,
Pitched in those woods where geysers roar ;
And every hour Old Faithful sent
His hoarse, fierce message to my door.
But never once, in slumber bound,
By all his screaming was I stirred ;
At dawn, I started at a sound :
Roused by the twittering of a bird.

6.

Rose-colored is the fragile, delicate flower
To ripen into fruit if so I choose ;
But I am fain to keep this perfect hour
Rose-colored still, whatever fruit I lose.

7.

Not with the daisy's foolish trustfulness,
But with the confidence of slow-won strength,
To the world's gaze it silently unfolds
The perfect flower of a royal soul,
Not innocent, and yet forever pure.

8.

You say, " If only I had never met that man ! " or
" If only I had never met that woman ! " or " If only
I had never read that book ! " But do not deceive
yourself so lightly ; you would have met some other
man, some other woman, some other book, if in your
temperament there is the seed to flourish in such soil.
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in
ourselves.

AUGUST 9-14

9.

"Afraid of a bullet? Well, I promise that every bullet aimed at you shall go through me first," said the air to a soldier.

10.

To the thinking and poetic mind something has been lost as well as gained, when the problem has been finally solved, the poem finished, the invention perfected, the picture sold.

11.

The little boy who defined faith as "trying to believe something that you know isn't so," would undoubtedly define duty as "something nobody likes to do."

12.

Some things or people may not be crude, but neither is their juiciness that of ripe fruit ; it is that of fruit which has been baked.

13.

The book has good things in it, but it is not good. It has no vitality. It is like a room well furnished, but not well aired.

14.

How women do love scenes ! Even if one has decided to renounce scenes, she would like to have a grand scene of renunciation.

AUGUST 15-18

15.

One pities the man or the woman who have not once in their lives been lifted off their feet by some great enthusiasm.

16.

Talk about Zeuxis painting cherries so that the birds pecked at them; why, Helen sang "Ye Merry Birds" the other day so that the cat came and stationed herself before her, and looked wistfully up at her throat.

17.

"England expects every man to do his duty." Of course she does; but it is very sad that she has to remind him of it.

18.

It is not true that repression is good for the soul. Self-control is good, but repression is dangerous. Even if a soul lives under repression, you can never know how much finer it would have been under sweeter influences. The night-blooming cereus is the only flower absolutely injured by sunlight. Try to find a vent for every reasonable desire; but what you must not or cannot indulge, must be uprooted with all your strength and forgotten; not merely repressed and allowed to ferment.

AUGUST 19-24

19.

Education means as much suppression as it does cultivation; uprooting, as well as planting.

20.

Would it be
Harder to wake years hence to sense of thirst
Than to stand thirsty now? Aye, bear thy thirst
Patiently now, else future sands may drain
Thy heart's life-blood.

21.

Rich is the summer's glory only when
It turns not into ashes, but to snow,
That in its white dew holds a rose again.

22.

One rose before the dawn, and stole along
The dull shore, waiting for the light to be;
That he, before the unimpatient throng,
Might watch the sunrise on the splendid sea.

23.

Judge a millionaire not by what he spends, but by
what he earns.

Judge a clerk not by what he earns, but by what
he spends.

24.

After life's fitful fever to wake well!

AUGUST 25-29

25.

Some people talk beautifully about being willing to "renounce," when their problem is really, not to renounce something that belongs to them, but not to snatch after something that doesn't. How can you "renounce" a thing you never ought to have?

26.

The asbestos fire-proof curtain at the theatres alarms more than it soothes. You are reminded not so much of your safety in case of fire, as of the possibility of a fire. Once, under the sudden suggestion, I lifted my eyes, and seeing a lady in one of the boxes, fancied for an instant that her beautiful gray hair was smoke!

27.

Like a serenade, outwardly wishing sweet sleep to the beloved, but cunningly adapted to keep her very wide awake, and attentive to the serenader.

28.

The important thing is not so much to do the right thing, as to like doing the right thing.

29.

He has the intuitions that do not require the verification of experience. He has lived all his life in Boston, but he knows Boston nature as if he had never been anywhere else, and human nature as if he had been everywhere else.

AUGUST 30-SEPTEMBER 2

30.

Try less to impress children with creeds and dogmas and sense of duty, and even principles, than to foster in them instincts and tastes which shall make any outward prop to their morality and taste for virtue entirely unnecessary.

31.

You are happy? Ah, but that is not enough! I must know what it is that makes you happy. During the Columbus celebrations, when the whole city was alive with enthusiasm and delight, a drunken man in the horse-car announced that he, too, meant to "enjoy" himself that week. It was easy to see in what he had learned to place his enjoyment.

SEPTEMBER

1.

"All evil souls to live in hell!" thus ran
The stern decree; but when Mephisto fell,
For the arch-fiend, arch-punishment; his ban
Must be that he shall like to live in hell.

2.

Stretched on the rack, his proud soul seeks to slay
Proud pain with prouder utterance; and so
He has some slight reward: the critics say
His work is so much stronger now, you know!

SEPTEMBER 3-7

3.

One week of glorious rain!
And the streams run full again,
And the lakes that shrivelled and curled
In the breath of the blinding sun,
Frail as their lilies are,
Unfurl again to the air,
Like cool and silvery leaves
Sparkling up to the light,
With their brown beds out of sight.

4.

The early bird catches the worm; but so does the early apple.

5.

The leopard cannot change his spots—nor the ermine its spotlessness.

6.

You want to know the world? Yes, of course; but did it ever occur to you that what we call learning to know the world, is in reality creating the world which the next generation will be in and want to know?

7.

It is odd that old furniture is always beautiful, wherever you put it; but new furniture only looks well in new surroundings.

SEPTEMBER 8-10

8.

He cannot haste with eager eyes to see
Its coming ; whether it be dull or fair—
This day that dawns—he knows not ; it may be
It brings him suffering keener still to bear.

Ah, God ! how great the gift that Thou hast given,
When those who only know the night is past,
Send to thee, in thy far-off, silent heaven,
The gladdest thanks that day has dawned at last.

9.

Dux femina facti. Which, being interpreted, means that a woman usually leads the facts, even if men lead in the ideas about the facts. Virgil wrote about Carthage, but it was Dido who built the Carthage that he wrote about.

10.

Then harvests come; if mine is big,
I am too happy with my store;
If small, I'm too much occupied
With grubbing round to make it more.
In dim recesses of my mind,
I have no idle hour to spend
In hunting up the bitter foe
Who simply ought to be my friend.

SEPTEMBER 11-14

11.

Beautiful enough to remind you of Italy ; though, perhaps, not beautiful enough to make you forget Italy.

12.

“How foolish to be afraid of the dark ! Why, look at me !” said the Potato to the Little Girl.

13.

They never should suspect, not they,
From anything he did or said,
While staying in the city there,
That he was country-born and bred.
They'd find it hard, he guessed they would,
To make him wonder at the show ;
He'd not admire a single thing,
But take good care no one should know
He was a country bumpkin.

14.

He walked across the Brooklyn Bridge ;
He saw the Park, and gravely went
To panorama, theatre,
And Greenwood, on grim pleasure bent.
He ordered at Delmonico's
Buckwheats and syrup—good ones, too—
But never once did he admire
Or praise a thing. And so we knew
He was a country bumpkin.

SEPTEMBER 15-19

15.

"I cannot lure them, for I cannot fly !"

With listless petals on the summer air,
The drooping flower breathed a quivering sigh,
For dainty butterflies that would not care.

Upon her breast a touch of velvet wings ;
Even as on the air her sigh arose,
Had come to her the restless, fluttering things,
Lured by the loveliness of her repose.

16.

Nature succeeds in securing what it is necessary to
have done in the universe, by endowing each of us
with a keen sense of our own importance, which is
not meant to make us vain, but to make us valuable.

17.

She never forgets to be kind ; but her kindness is
not like that of people who do not have to remember.

18.

More restful even than rest,
The passionate sweetness that is everywhere ;
Soft splendors in the west
Touch with the charm of coming changefulness
The yielding hills.

19.

Her heart is like the lilies that bloom wide
In restful calmness on the restless tide,
Asking not where the eager waters glide.

SEPTEMBER 20-23

20.

The brooding stillness of the delicate air,
Dreamier than the dreamiest depths of sleep,
Falls softly everywhere.

Still let me keep
One little hour longer tryst with thee,
O Day of days !
Lean down to me,
In tender beauty of thy amethyst haze !

21.

How did she know ? He had not said
That he would come that day ; he wrote
No single line ; and yet she knew
Without a word, without a note.

The breezes knew it, and they told
Her heart, although they seemed so dumb ;
So she put on her prettiest gown,
And then—he didn't come.

22.

I wonder why toleration is always judged from the
point of the tolerator ? Of course it is very kind of
you to tolerate me ; but, as for me, I do not wish to
be tolerated. If you will not love me, I insist upon
your hating me.

23.

The ordinary boy crosses a field to get somewhere ;
the kindergarten boy sees things on the way.

SEPTEMBER 24-27

24.

You tell me that your boy was ruined at college ;
but before I blame for that his collegiate experience,
I must be sure that he would not have been ruined
anywhere else.

25.

Has she found the Fountain of Youth ?
Nay, her hair is white to-day ;
But she *is* the Fountain of Youth :
Know her, and love her, forsooth,
And your own will never turn gray.

26.

The Indian summer lays
Her tender touch upon the emerald hills ;
Exquisite thrills
Of delicate gladness fill the blue-veined air.

27.

Though clear,
In the broad daylight, unrestrained and free
As breeze from heaven, naught between us lay
But the wide, shining, trackless fields of air
That gave no sign ; the lonely vastness where
Love saw no clue to guide it or to stay
Its course—well might the lover in despair
Yield up his search—and yet Love found a way!

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 1

28.

All art is great in proportion as it is divested of the artist's personality. A work of art must appeal to you as something that exists; not as a thing that has been done.

29.

It makes the world a rare and gracious place
To dwell in ! Yet we need not greatly care
To keep forever in that laughing face
The radiance of a joy so debonair ;
Because this lady in bewildering gowns
Is every bit as charming when she frowns.

30.

Croon, happy insects ; violet and rose
Have faded ; yet the autumn cornfield glows
Where in the golden grain the poppy grows.

OCTOBER.

1.

The very air
Has grown heroic ; a few crimson leaves
Have fallen here ; but not to yield their breath
In pitiful sighing at so sad a fate ;
But royally, as with spilt blood of kings.

OCTOBER 2-6

2.

We cannot educate our grandmother, we say; but there are grandmothers whom we can educate. The children of to-day are the grandmothers of the future: we can educate them.

3.

And something of the rich
And brilliant glow of her own nature fell
On every one about her, till they stood
Transfigured in her eyes, with glory caught
From her own loveliness.

4.

While I, who watch the clouds grow faint and far,
See the sun, too, slip softly from the flowers;
Turn in the twilight, light my room's inner star,
And with a book forget both sun and showers.

5.

The more public kindergartens now, the fewer jails
hereafter.

6.

Tyrannical women are treated very differently from tyrannical men. Men who become tyrants are eventually stabbed; but women are immortalized. Cæsar has a Brutus, Charles I. a Cromwell, George III. a Washington; but Laura has a Petrarch, Beatrice a Dante, Shakespeare's cruel *inconnue* his magnificent sonnets.

OCTOBER 7-10

7.

Fortunately, the aspiration is almost always tempered to the shorn lamb ; our desire to do is usually in proportion to our ability.

8.

“ You will like him ; he is a man after your own heart,” said the Dealer to the Lettuce.

“ That’s what I’m afraid of,” answered the Lettuce sadly.

9.

The harvests all are gathered in ;
No longer need we hope or fear ;
The best—the worst—has come to us,
In groaning barns or scanty ear.
No longer need we dread or hope ;—
We know the best or worst of Fate ;
Ah ! love me quickly, sweetheart, now,
Lest later it should be too late !

10.

Upon the vine
Rich, clinging clusters of the ripening grape
Hang silent in the sun ;
But in each one
Beats with full throb the quickening purple wine,
Whose pulse shall round the perfect fruit to shape.

OCTOBER 11-15

11.

The test of a good teacher is not how many questions he can ask his pupils that they will answer readily, but how many questions he inspires them to ask him which he finds it hard to answer.

12.

I think, indeed, I long for leaves to fall;
For clear, straight vistas.

13.

The peace that wraps
Me here is not the warm and golden peace
Of summer afternoons, that lull the soul
To dreamy indolence; but strong white peace—
Peace that is conscious power in repose.

14.

The place of woman has rightly been called a sphere : you cannot escape from her in literature or life. The farther you walk away from her, the nearer you are to meeting her on the other side. Leave her, you will find her waiting for you in the first novel you take up to divert your mind away from her.

15.

And one shall count as hero among these
For whose impulsive daring Fate decrees,
“ He also served, who did not stand and wait.”

OCTOBER 16-20

16.

The old, old story men would call our love ;
One cannot think of any time so old
That some "I love you" was not gladly told
To some one listening gladly.

17.

It is hard to say wherein genuine thoughtfulness for others consists. Regard for the next tenant would seem to imply great conscientiousness in the matter of driving tacks ; but for myself, I love the tenant before me who has been utterly unprincipled in this respect ; then I am at liberty myself to cover up his tracks or tacks with tack-holes of my own.

18.

O Ivy, still must we lament
Thou canst not with our joy in thee have part,
And thyself know how fair a thing thou art !

19.

See to it that you don't let a real Oliver Twist be turned away from your door in neglect while you are indulging in the luxury of woe over the fictitious Oliver in the book.

20.

Some people's graces are like the spice in a simple concoction : it is nicely spiced, but the groundwork did not seem worth spicing at all.

OCTOBER 21-25

21.

People are mistaken who think they must be "in it" if they are to judge of anything. You lose your point of view unless you are a little away from anything. You must walk towards it, perhaps, to understand it thoroughly ; but don't stay there.

22.

Her surroundings are charming. Pity there is so little to surround !

23.

And straightway in my heart there did arise
Things brave and sweet to meet yours ; so en-
wrought
With yours, I knew not, in the swift surprise,
Which was the Teacher, which the humbly taught.

24.

No life could be
More sweet than that past life of mine, I thought ;
And when the changing years in fulness brought
Another life, enriched by love and thee,
That all my beautiful past should seem as nought,—
This is the miracle Love wrought for me !

25.

The convent may often be a safe or a beautiful resource for a wounded or a penitent soul ; but many make the mistake of entering it for happiness, before they know what happiness really is.

OCTOBER 26-30

26.

The squirrels are storing their nuts quite openly in little crevices along the rustic fence. How does each squirrel know his own nut ? or does any squirrel help himself later to any nut ? And do they ever cheat each other—or never ? How one would like to know !

27.

Clear outlined form in statuesque repose :

What color needs such matchless form as this ?

If I forget the fragrance of the rose,

Something is mine the loveliest rose must miss.

28.

By sympathy I do not mean kindness ; anybody can be kind, but only a few know how to be sympathetic.

29.

Alert and fine the keen-eared deer stands still,

Listening : no sound of sportsman or of gun ;

Yet through the arrowed lake it cleaves its will

At its fawn's faint cry to the setting sun.

30.

Some hearts fascinate because we watch them ; others are more fascinating because we are admitted to them ; as an artist said, "Norway is more interesting than Alaska, because you sail into it instead of along it."

OCTOBER 31-NOVEMBER 3

31.

Brilliant pools, set like jewels, clear as diamonds,
lovelier in color than opals, in rims of fretted frost
delicate as lace and firm as marble.

NOVEMBER

1.

And once my heart was like a nest,
High in the apple-branches hung,
Where in the early April dew
No happy birds have ever sung.
Now 'tis itself a wounded bird ;
And though sometimes you hear it sing,
The Heavenly Father knows what pain
It tries to hide by uttering
The same sweet notes it used to sing.

2.

Distrust circumstantial evidence. A boy's close-cut head does not mean that his hair has not grown any ; indeed, if it means anything, it probably means that it is now so short because it did grow so long.

3.

It is not strange, we say, that the wretched so often drown their misery in sin ; but it is very singular how often the fortunate drown their happiness in it.

NOVEMBER 4-8

4.

No fragrance floats on the autumnal air ;
The white chrysanthemums and asters star
The frosty silence, but their leaves exhale
No passion of remembrance or regret.
The perfect calmness and the perfect strength
My senses wrap in an enchanted robe
Woven of frost and fire ; as if my soul
Had tasted some elixir of rich wine,
Ripened beneath the haughtiest of suns,
Then cooled with flakes of snow.

5.

The test of a good housekeeper is not that you notice her housekeeping, but that you don't notice it.

6.

Crisp is the air in glades white with the frost ;
But in the gardens richer colors come :
Gladiolus and aster, though the lost
Came back as ghosts, in pale chrysanthemum.

7.

Then exquisite tracery of unburdened boughs
Will they leave outlined on the cool gray sky,
While on the frozen ground their lovelier shadows
lie.

8.

I wonder why a ragged old woman is so much more interesting in a picture than in the street !

NOVEMBER 9-13

9.

Let me run fast the race that I may lose ;
Better to lose the prize than lose the thrill.
Let me run fast; this is the rest I choose,
And I am only restless sitting still.

10.

Don't stop long enough to say, "Get thee behind
me, Satan !" Walk on, and he soon will be behind
you.

11.

Proudly she carries high her queenly head ;
Bravely her light laugh rings upon the air ;
"Let music sound, and let us dance," she said—
But dance not with her, for she is Despair.

12.

Training is always valuable. The untrained genius
may do better things than the trained man of medioc-
rity ; but that will not prevent the trained genius
from doing better things than the untrained genius.

13.

What keeps the quiet parlor
In such beautiful repose ?
It's the watchful peacock feathers,
Whose eyelids never close.

NOVEMBER 14-18

14.

It seems to be a point for the Materialist that an unhealthy physical brain will make or keep the mind unhealthy. But it is a stronger point for the spiritual theory that a perfectly healthy physical brain cannot make or keep the mind healthy, if the mind has troubles of its own.

15.

The chilling wind, that with resistless power

Flashed fear through quivering poplars at its will,
Creeps down the sheeted ivy on the tower,
Sobs on the grass, and now at last is still.

16.

"I don't make the best of it," he used to say, "but I let other people make the best of it for me. Anyone who can give me anything to alleviate the situation is a welcome being. I am saved from unhappiness by not having any proper pride."

17.

Some people's virtue is alarming ; like that of the little boy who is so devotedly good all the morning that you know perfectly well he is planning mischief . which will need forgiveness for the afternoon.

18.

A single drop of vinegar will spoil a whole goblet of fresh water ; but a single drop of fresh water has no effect whatever on a goblet of vinegar.

NOVEMBER 19-24

19.

Despair not; when your roses in the gleam
Of too much sunlight, fade like a bright dream,
The glorious cardinals fringe the brightening stream.

20.

The problem of life is to be able to readjust yourself to altered circumstances.

21.

Be proud if you are able to inspire strong feeling;
prouder, if you are able to feel strongly yourself;
proudest, when you are able to resist, or rather to control, any feeling, however strong.

22.

Yet I, who thought my heart could be so brave
To bear what I had wisdom to foresee,
Sob in despair, as this poor day that gave
Me nothing, sinks behind the western sea!

23.

Love will find out a way through bolts and bars
and parental interdiction; but Love itself would be
baffled on the prairie, where the whole universe
stretches in endless invitation.

24.

Congenial atmosphere is everything; to be where
you like to be is sometimes pleasanter than to do
what you like to do.

NOVEMBER 25-29

25.

The eager year
Is passing, with its triumphs and defeats.
Alike earth rests from labor and from joy;
Hushing each tiniest insect ; wearing now
No careless ornament of flower or leaf;
Reaching her pleading arms up to the sky
In longing for its silent chrism of snow
In benediction.

26.

Virtue is crystallized good taste.

27.

We who sought
Beauty that thrills, feel softly round us close
A white and splendid peace.

28.

Ah! but I love this snow upon the hills;
I love this frosty silence in the air;
I care not that the lark no longer trills;
I care for nothing but what still is there!

29.

Not brooding over her lost violets,
High in her hands upon the leafless trees
She holds the woodbine, swaying in the wind,
A crimson rosary of remembered sins.

NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 4

30.

When a man begins giving you reasons why he should not do a thing, he is dangerously near giving himself reasons why he may do it.

DECEMBER

1.

Toleration of the intolerant is the hardest thing for a bigoted liberal.

2.

Not to the help some falling vine has found,
That, trailing listless on the frozen ground,
Clings suddenly to some high trellis there,
Lifting itself once more into the air,
With timid tendrils on the lattice wound.
Rather to help the drooping plant has won,
That, weary with the beating of the rains,
Feels, quickening in its own responsive veins,
The sudden shining of a distant sun.

3.

I don't expect to be responsible for your decision;
I was only afraid I might be responsible for your indecision.

4.

Danger comes, not because we find charm where we ought not to look for it, but that we don't find it where we ought to.

DECEMBER 5-8

5.

Yet happier these, I said,
Than one who by experience made strong,
Learning to live without the precious dead,
Survive despair, outlive remorse and wrong,
Can say when new grief comes, with unbent head,
“Let me not mourn! I shall forget ere long!”

6.

Art is not meant to be merely natural. Art is Nature grown conscious of herself; it is Nature in a mirror. But you hold up a mirror, not merely to see what is there, but to see what is awry. The ability to see what is awry is what makes you a man instead of a beast; and the ability to set right what is awry is what makes you an artist in addition to being a man.

7.

*“Though thy sins
Have been as scarlet, they shall be like wool.”*
God’s benediction calms my troubled heart,
Worn with its consciousness of frailty,
Even as upon the fading crimson leaves
Fall tenderly the first white flakes of snow.

8.

What is called a “rounded nature” has its own weaknesses; it has not the defects of its qualities, but neither has it the qualities of its defects.

DECEMBER 9-14

9.

Perhaps Art is the Nature of Heaven.

10.

When your child is restless, pride yourself not on forcing him to keep still, but on finding some reasonable thing for him to do in which his restlessness becomes an activity.

11.

Then once again the softly falling snow;
While bright above the ivy green below
The scarlet berries of the holly glow.

12.

It is hard to know how to treat her: if you thwart her, it upsets her; and if you let her do as she pleases, she upsets herself.

13.

The test of wisdom is its sympathy with folly.
The test of folly is—doing it again.

14.

Work? I would gladly work
In the dull December light;
I only ask for work
When the days are long and bright.
When underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
I shall not envy them their wings,
If I get work in the spring.

DECEMBER 15-18

15.

Think not to know the secret of that room;
Closed is the door, even to herself; no more
She lingers there, though well our hearts are sure
It is no spot of shadowy, haunted gloom.

16.

What ladylike trees the aspens are, with their
little gold-colored, heart-shaped leaves, so slim and
slender and dainty and prettily behaved! And to
complete the simile, such a bundle of nerves! None
of them lean; all are straight on the slope, and alert
as young Indians, seeming less to cling to the little
foothold given them, than spurning even the little
that there is.

17.

She demanded his past; forgetting that it is not
what your past has been, but what your past has
made of you. Not "*What were you ?*" but "*What
are you ?*"

18.

In winter? Well, in winter—ugh!
Who would add hate to winds that freeze?
All love and warmth that I can get
I need in such dull days as these.
No, no, dear foe, it is no use;
The struggling year is at an end;
I cannot hate you if I would,
And you must turn and be my friend.

DECEMBER 19-23

19.

The test of friendship is:

1. How much you have to say to each other.
2. How little you need to say to each other.
3. How much you enjoy differing with each other.

20.

The test of a good comrade is how much you enjoy talking with him.

The test of sympathy is how much he enjoys talking with you.

21.

The test of a woman's power is not how exclusively you think of her when she is there, but how often you think of her when she is not there.

22.

Hush, eager voices! for in dreamless sleep,
Wrapped in cool snow, the restless earth would keep
Forevermore serenity so deep.

23.

O Ariel of my Fancy, come with me!

For gay and glad are the light-hearted throng,

Gay with glad words, and glad with gayer song.

I would the gayest of the glad ones be;

But airy wit comes, Ariel, from thee;

Sweet friend, in this my need, desert not me!

DECEMBER 24-27

24.

The remedy for the insane mind, like the safeguard for a sane one, is not so much bars as a vent.

25.

Something new about Christmas?

Why, what were half so sweet
As the old, old way of keeping
The day our glad hearts greet?

Then my little lad said slyly,
"Remember, if that's true,
That your old, old way, mamma, dear,
Was to give me something new!"

26.

It may be that those people are happiest who have had no histories; but of that terrible thing, "experience," one may well doubt, at the end of any year, which is most terrible: to have had it, or not to have had it.

27.

The cool and passionless North,
Wrapt in ermine of snow,
Exquisite laces of frost,
And silver bangles of rain;
With fine strong winds that blow
Through forests of cedar and pine,
With a glittering breath like wine.

DECEMBER 28-31

28.

There is a dissipation of the soul which is quite as intoxicating as any other dissipation.

29.

Unselfish, because he never remembers himself; dignified, because he never forgets himself.

30.

God's best gift to us is that he gives not things, but opportunities.

31.

Silence—and stars—and restful peace. And then?



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